

**TOWN OF STEILACOOM**  
**Pierce County, Washington**  
**January 1, 1993 Through December 31, 1994**

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**Schedule Of Findings**

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1. The Public Safety Department And The Municipal Court Were Not In Full Compliance With The Accounting For Traffic Citations

During our audit of the Town of Steilacoom, we reviewed the Department of Public Safety and the Municipal Court's accounting for citations. We found that the town was not in full compliance with the accounting for citations. These departments bear the responsibility for the tracking of citations from issuance to final disposition in the court.

Our audit of traffic citations issued by the Town of Steilacoom Public Safety Department noted the following instance of non-compliance:

- A citation was issued and subsequently voided by someone other than the municipal court judge.
- Citations were not adequately monitored from issuance to the officer to final disposition in the court.
- Copies of issued citations had been destroyed by the Public Safety Department.

The improperly dismissed citation, was dismissed by a court clerk without any apparent approval of the residing judge. This court clerk is no longer employed by the Town of Steilacoom.

The system as set-up by the town did not adequately address the recordkeeping requirements imposed by RCW 46.64.010.

The copies of citations which should have been retained by Department of Public Safety were destroyed at the direction of the police chief.

RCW 46.64.010 states:

Upon the deposit of the original or a copy of such traffic citation with a court having competent jurisdiction over the alleged offense or with its traffic violations bureau as aforesaid, said original or copy of such traffic citation may be disposed of only by trial in said court or other official action by a judge of said court . . . Any person who cancels or solicits the cancellation of any traffic citation, in any manner other than as provided in this section, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

RCW 46.64.010 requires that:

The chief administrator officer of every traffic enforcement agency shall require the return to him of a copy of every traffic citation issued by an officer under his supervision to an alleged violator of any traffic law or

ordinance and of all copies of every traffic citation which has been spoiled or upon which entry has been made and not issued to an alleged violator.

The chief administrator shall also maintain or cause to be maintained in connection with every traffic citation issued by an officer under his supervision a record of disposition of the charge by the court or its traffic violations bureau in which the original or copy of the traffic citation was deposited.

RCW 40.14.070 states:

Official public records shall not be destroyed unless the records are six or more years old . . . .

When citations are not properly monitored and recorded, it is impossible to determine if the provisions of RCW 46.64.010 were met and additionally increases the possibility that errors would not be detected.

Additionally, failure to adequately retain records inhibits the ability to audit the actions of the Department of Public Safety and Municipal Court.

We recommend that the town officials establish procedures to meet the requirements of RCW 46.64.010 and RCW 40.14.070.